



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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Then, at the next sitting, scrutinize your beginning and your model together, and look at them in the mirror. You see that on the whole you have nearly got the right look, seen from a distance. Here you want light; there you want dark; and elsewhere a little trimming of edges where the paint has run. You know how to take off dark spots of colour with a damp clean brush, and how to fill in lights accidentally left, so that your tints need not be left as blotchy as they came at first. Some amount of retouching is likely to be necessary. But the aim of the lesson is to paint a head which, however unfinished, will be solid—the darks broad and the lights gradated; and soft—with no harsh or crude handling; and full of colour—not a mere tinted monochrome. And with this power gained you have gone up the three steps and in at the little door.

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In these four years we travelled over a wide field of study, from simple objects of still-life to landscape and the rudiments of composition and portraiture. We painted all manner of animals, and applied ourselves, not in vain, to figures and faces. Those members who were able to give reasonable attention to the work of the club, as set forth in the papers, and still more in the criticisms and instructions of the monthly portfolio, do not, I believe, regret the time they spent. They were taught few tricks of the trade; still less were they induced to imitate any popular mannerism. For the aim of this club was in accordance with the aim of this *Review*—to make drawing the means of a true education, by which, in learning to sketch, one may learn a more valuable art,—the Art of Seeing.

"EDUCATION AND THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER."

THE following appeal, which appeared in the *Times* of January 22nd, is so germane to the teaching of the P.N.E.U. that we venture to recall it to our readers and to emphasise these wise utterances by reprinting the appeal in the *Parents' Review*. In the introductory leaflet of our Union we read: "Special stress is laid on the use of the word education, in its widest sense, not as meaning instruction only, but the development of the whole nature, on the underlying principle that 'character is everything.' The two functions of education (as it is understood by the Union), are the presentation of ideas and the formation of habits. These two, it will be seen, are the chief means at our disposal for the modification of character."

At this moment all the world wonders at the splendid exhibition of heroic moral qualities afforded to us by our Eastern allies. A prophet of their own discloses to us the secret of this fine national character. It is not spontaneous; the Japanese are, after all, but as other men. But every Japanese, of whatever rank, has been brought under a careful and inspiring system of moral education; inspiring, because the whole—courtesy, kindness, discipline, fortitude, courage, and all the amazing list of virtues which have come to stand in our minds for Japan—springs from the central idea of *loyalty*. The people waited upon their Emperor for certain precepts of morality; and these strong and simple precepts have been expanded and enforced in every school and college, every army corps and naval training school, illustrated by ethical teaching and examples from the literature of other nations, as well as from that of Japan.

"Can ye not discern the signs of the times?" said our Master; and here is a lesson, offered to all Christian peoples, on the efficacy of moral teaching; a lesson which we, who believe in the divine government of the world, may not suffer to pass unheeded.

It is as though the Voice from Sinai spoke again: "Keep ye the Law." As the seed that is sown yields seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so surely shall the sowing of living moral ideas yield the fruits of splendid action and noble character.

"The following appeal has been sent to the local education authorities in England and Wales:—

"We, whose names are undersigned, desire to approach you, as one of the local education authorities of the country to whom a high and responsible task has been entrusted; for those who hold controlling power over the education of the country are guiding the destinies of the people. We are sure that in this high task you will be inspired with the unselfish spirit of an enlightened patriotism, and, being assured of this, we appeal to you with the more confidence, on behalf of what we believe to be the chief end of all true education, the formation of moral character.

"The supreme importance of this has never been denied, and we rejoice that it has been clearly and judiciously recognised by the highest public authorities in the introduction to the recently issued Code, but in the zeal of other things it has often been overlooked, and the means of securing it disregarded. We, therefore, most earnestly desire that in all schools effective moral training, based upon those Christian principles which ought to pervade all teaching and discipline, should be provided. On this account we trust and have reason to hope that Bible teaching, fitly graded, will be continued in the schools under your care; but you are aware, we feel sure, that experience has shown that this religious teaching is not sufficient unless supported by influences inspired by the spirit of that teaching; for principles unless translated into living example are of little effect in forming those tastes and habits out of which character is built, and without which the build is but poorly equipped to meet the temptations of life.

"Our anxiety on this matter is all the greater when we contemplate the special dangers to which the young in our own day are exposed; these are well known to you, and we need not recall the changes in national conditions which have multiplied these perils. It is enough to recall that changed

conditions of trade have weakened the sense of responsibility of employers for the young people in their service—that the chance of earning wages at an early age has tended to give greater independence to the young, and that in consequence parental authority and home discipline are lessened. Freedom too early acquired, and the feverish love of excitement, dull and insanitary dwellings add zest to the unworthy attraction and turbulent play of the streets. Moral, and to a large extent also, physical deterioration is the result, and the savage hooliganism of which we have heard so much is not unlikely to follow.

"Our hope to remedy evils like these lies under God, in the opportunity which education affords. The children are under influence for eight or ten years; they are ours to form their character in the most receptive and plastic years of their life; herein is our opportunity not only for imparting knowledge, but for inculcating those habits of self-restraint, true conscientiousness, fidelity, honour, and kindness, which are needful alike for individual self-respect and national well-being. From these habits springs character, the best asset, it has been said, of a nation's wealth, the best guarantee of its industrial energy, and the strongest bulwark of its security. We earnestly trust, therefore, that, while other objects are pursued, this—the supreme object of all education—the formation of character, will hold the chief place in the aim of local authorities, managers, and teachers.

"Inasmuch as great advantage has resulted from conferences designed to promote intellectual and technical efficiency, we hope that like conferences may be promoted to secure co-operation and efficiency in the moral training in our schools on a Christian basis and inspired by Christian motives. That the teachers themselves should be inspired by the best and highest ideals appears to us to be of the highest importance, and we, therefore, would earnestly and respectfully suggest that in our normal training institutions the true aims of education should be constantly brought before those into whose hands the education of the young will naturally pass.

"We ask your indulgence, while we claim your sympathy, in placing these considerations before you. We represent widely divergent views on many matters connected with

the subject, and it is understood that in making this appeal we do not surrender our individual ideas of education and educational policy or of the Christian teaching, denominational or otherwise, which we seek to secure. We approach the matter in the interests of no denomination, but in the interests of the nation and on behalf of the children who will be the men and women of the next generation, and on whose moral fibre and character the welfare of the Empire will depend."

The list of signatories which follows represents the best public opinion of the country. A few "Practical Suggestions" follow:—

"1. The reading books should be of a kind which hold up high ideals of conduct; they should contain stories of heroism, self-denial, and integrity, and thus give the teacher the opportunity of teaching the value of character.

"2. Songs which stir the noblest emotions should be encouraged; songs tend to form the character of the young.

"3. Pictures which illustrate heroic deeds might be placed on the walls.

"4. Scholars should have their attention drawn to the laws of health and Christian conduct, from which the evils of intemperance and gambling and other vices which degrade national character could be pointed out.

"5. Teachers could, by superintending games in the playground, promote manliness of character, self-control, and a love of fair play.

"6. The formation of an old scholars' association cultivates loyalty to the school and a wholesome *esprit de corps*.

"It is to be hoped that a committee may be formed to co-operate with the local authorities in furthering the objects of this appeal."

Possibly we fail to give "effective moral training based upon Christian principles" to the young people—the formation of whose characters is our chief concern—because our teaching is scrappy, and rests mainly upon appeals to the emotions through tale and song. These are excellent so far as they go, but emotional response is short-lived, and the appeal is deadened by repetition: the response of the intellect to coherent and consecutive teaching appears, on the contrary, to be continuous and enduring. Boys and girls have as much

capacity to apprehend what is presented to their minds as have their elders; and, like their elders, they take great pleasure and interest in an appeal to their understanding which discovers to them the ground plan of human nature—a common possession. "Who was it that said 'Know thyself' came down from heaven? It is quite true—true as Gospel. It came straight to whoever said it first."—(*Life of Sir Edward Burne-Jones*). The right point of view to take is, probably, that all beautiful and noble possibilities are present in everyone; but that each is subject to assault and hindrance in various ways, of which we should be aware, that we may watch and pray.

"Oh, brave new world! How beauteous mankind is!"

says Miranda, and it is well that children too should know that mankind and they themselves are "beauteous." Hortatory teaching is apt to bore both children and their elders; but an ordered presentation of the possibilities that lie in human nature can hardly fail to have an enlightening and stimulating effect. An appeal to young people to make the most of themselves, because of the vast possibilities that are in them and of the law of God which constrains them, will not fail of its effect.